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Hot buttons of Motivation

What 'moves' you?

To motivate 'knowledge Employees' is a challenge. Effective Leaders engage innovative ways of motivation by understanding the 'hot buttons' that ticks the behaviour, says M R CHANDRAMOWLY.

'KUMAR Ram' is known as The Manager-Anything. He can resolve any issue, whether it is a problem with people or process. He can break the ice and bring a smile on the face of a cynic and lonely person. He loves the challenge of finding out how people work to their best. While working with his team members, he genuinely expresses their importance and the values of what they do. He also surprises them with challenging and enriching assignments. He is never shy of admitting and learning from his mistakes. That brings him closer to his team members. In recent times, Ram told me "I enjoy my job and the opportunities I have, I am continuously learning new things to deal with people to inspire each one of them, I need to consistently watch, since things are changing; individual expectations, motivating factors, priorities, all are changing. I need to keep myself up. Also I think I like my team members more as we move on. I am getting closer to them effortlessly." This is one aspect of Leadership Competency, "Leading and motivating".

The top five factors of motivation

According to research by Rewick and Lawer, the top motivators at work are 1 - Job challenge, 2 - Accomplishing something worthwhile, 3 - Learning new things, 4 - Personal development, 5 - Autonomy. Salary? It takes the 12th position. Other factors include, Friendliness -14, Praise - 15, Chance of promotion -17; all these are low rank motivators compared to the more powerful 1-5.

Motivation

Saritha Sinha, is the Project Manager at an IT company. She feels that her salary and position are low because they do not reflect importance to the work she does in the organisation. Her need triggers a search for ways to satisfy it. Saritha could choose one of the three options. She can simply ask for a raise and promotion, work harder in the hope of getting a promotion, or to look for a new job with a fat salary and a prestigious title.

If she decides to work harder, she is likely to put in longer hours, work harder and so forth, Rewards or reprimands generally follow the performance. She may get a promotion. Saritha then assesses to which extent the need has been satisfied and decides to stop

trying outside or stay and accept what is offered in the current job, as the case may be.

Motivation is the set of forces that lead people to behave in particular ways. Unless the environment is motivating, abilities won't wake up to produce desired performance. Performance is a result of three factors: Motivation, Ability and Environment. $P=f(M, A \text{ and } E)$. A performance driven leader has to thrive to ensure meeting of all the three conditions.

Personal motivation is 'inside-out' capability for working well and striving for improvement. It is about staying competitive to achieve tough goals, or even something no one has ever done (striving for innovation). It is the ability to focus on achieving perfection by working smarter and doing only what is necessary. It is the preparedness to take risks by trying out new things to improve personal productivity by fully utilising potential.

Intrinsic motivation or self-motivation is the best of the types. Daniel Goleman identifies three motivational competencies that typify outstanding performance (Working with Emotional Intelligence). Achievement Drive - Striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence. Secondly, Commitment - Embracing organisation's or group's vision and goals. Thirdly, Initiative and optimism - Twin competencies that mobilise people to seize opportunities and allow them to take setback and obstacles in stride.

The 'one right method'

One 'right method' to motivate people has changed more than once. Douglas McGregor(1960) asserted about only two ways to manage people, the Theory of X and Theory of Y. Peter Drucker also said similar things (The Practice of Management 1954). But a few years later Abraham Maslow showed in his Eupsychian Management (1962) that both McGregor and Drucker were wrong. He showed with conclusive evidence that different people have to be managed differently. Now there is a shift from 'managing people' to 'leading people'.

Employers of choice

In "The Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work for", the authors Robert Levering and Milton Moskowitz, maintain that 'priorities may change, layoffs may even be unavoidable but these organisations try hard to do right. Merck the pharmaceutical giant that stands at rank 31, did not slash work force during the flat profit days and diving stock times. Even if a company is on a strict restructuring/cost-cutting course, it is perilous to ignore people issues, according to Watson Wyatt (Restructuring can pay if done the right way).

Competent leaders create climate in which people desire to put in their best. They recognise the individual variable motivating factors and inspire many kinds of team members. They know that everyone is not naturally motivated and 'one style fits all' is a wrong model. In a way they can put their finger on the hot button of the individual to get their best. They are not afraid to assign work with tough deadlines. With such leaders around, employees feel the importance of their work and enjoy working with such leaders. This is because their leader is not only interested in getting best out of them but also helps

them to enhance their effectiveness.

How to know what motivates a person?

DDI research tells us, to just watch them. What do they emphasise in their speech? What do they display emotion around? What values play out for them? Mohan doesn't go to others for help first, doesn't discuss his feelings and he just takes action. If you like to motivate Mohan to be more effective, provide him more autonomy and challenging assignments. Ram says I am always been treated badly, every year I get lower increments my boss is always unhappy about my work. The emphasis of words 'always' 'every' indicates the areas where you have to work on mirroring the speech emphasis.

That is Ram's hot button. Apply the same thinking to others, when they talk about increment, appreciation, ethics, and perfection in their normal conversation, you can have the basic understanding of what motivates them. The Competency 'Leading and Motivating' is supported by other competencies such as Managerial Courage, Conflict Management, Managing team members, Delegation, Developing Direct Reports, Negotiating and Prioritising and performance measurement. Leading and Motivating is underpinned by human values such as : Trust , Positive attitude, Equality, Compassion, Consistence, Simplicity, Truthfulness, Self-discipline, Non-attachment and Gratitude.

Great motivators quickly understand what ticks the values and behaviours. They mirror the language of an individual. They may not agree with what one values, but consider a person as he is and not as they want him to be. They first look for something common between them and an individual. Then understand, talk about that bonding relationship. They also turn negatives in to positives by using appropriate communication understating where the hot buttons are.

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